



JMIC INFORMATION NOTE 21_AUG_2024 (06) INCIDENT NUMBER 93

MULTIPLE ATTACKS INVOLVING GREEK-FLAGGED VESSEL CRUDE OIL TANKER SOUNION

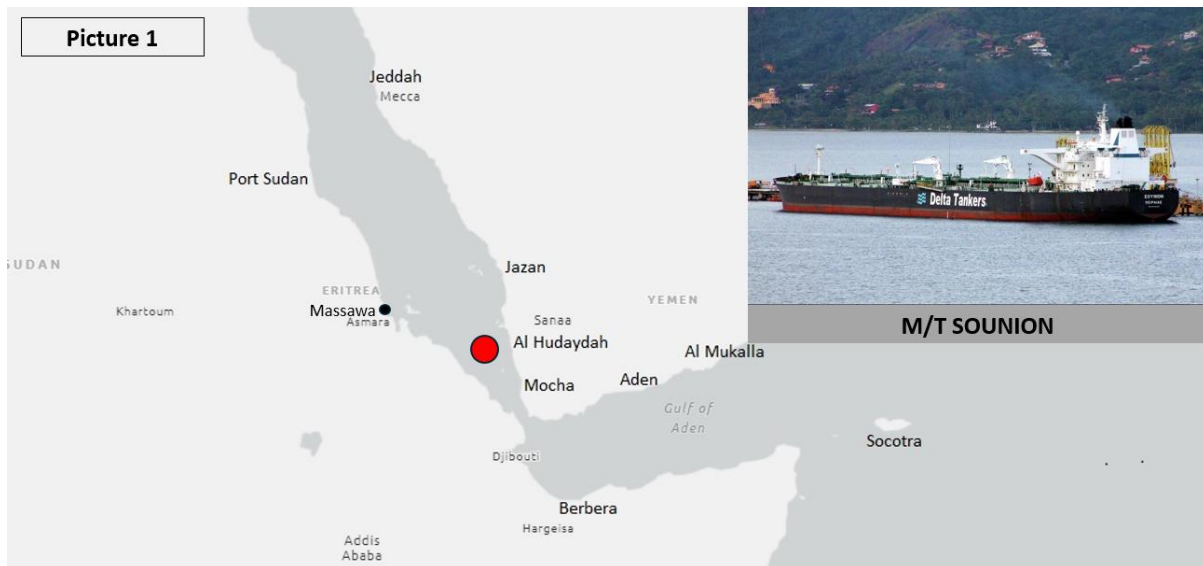
INCIDENT REPORT

Ref. UKMTO Incident Advisory 110

1. On 21st August 2024 there was an attack on the Greek-flagged **M/T SOUNION** (IMO: 9312145) by small boats and unknown airborne projectiles. Events are as follows:
 - 1) 0257 (UTC): Two skiffs approached the vessel 78 NM west of Al Hudaydah, Yemen.
 - 2) 0315 (UTC):
 - i. The ship's Master reported that two skiffs approached to approximately 3-4 cables. One skiff had up to 5 personnel on board. The other skiff had up to 12 personnel onboard.
 - ii. The crew attempted to hail the skiffs on VHF radio with no reply.
 - iii. The onboard Armed Security Team fired warning shots at the skiffs who then returned fire. The vessel observed flashing lights from the two skiffs and eventually the distance between the skiffs and vessel opened up to beyond 1NM.
 - 3) 0500 (UTC): The vessel reported being struck by two projectiles 84 NM NW of Al Hudaydah. The vessel lost propulsion and issued a Mayday call over VHF radio. The vessel reported to be Not Under Command.
 - 4) 0528 (UTC): The UKMTO reported that the Master believed that there were two earlier explosions in the engine compartment at 0417 UTC, the cause of which remains unknown. Furthermore, the Master reported a skiff monitoring the vessel from a distance.

- 5) 0551 (UTC): The Master reported to UKMTO that another strike occurred on the starboard quarter.

See **Picture 1** for incident location.



2. The JMIC has confirmed that M/T SOUNION was initially hit by two projectiles and then subsequently hit by a third projectile. All projectiles impacted the starboard quarter, damaging the engine compartment and starting a fire.
- The vessel's Master reported that the vessel went at anchor in approximate position 15° 00' N 041° 37' E.
 - The fire was reported to be contained.
 - The vessel was abandoned.
 - The crew is safe with one crew member sustaining a minor injury.
3. The JMIC has investigated and found no linkages to US/UK/Israel.

JMIC GUIDANCE

4. Freedom of navigation and the free flow of maritime commerce continue as a top priority while the southern Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. The current threat assessment identifies:

- a. Vessels with an Israeli, United States or United Kingdom association at highest risk
 - b. Any vessel within a Group or Company fleet structure whereby the company has been identified making port calls to Israel
5. **Vessels** intending to transit the threat area are recommended to exercise caution by applying the following:
- a. Conduct a threat and risk assessment prior to entering the area
 - b. Review security measures/incorporate appropriate vessel hardening measures into their security plans
 - c. Turning off any form of non-essential emissions (e.g. intra-ship UHF/VHF transmissions) and AIS policy in the vicinity of, or before transiting or entering the threat area is to be very carefully considered as part of the voyage risk mitigation process, as broadcasting on AIS is assessed to aid Houthi targeting
 - i. While transmitting AIS may be consistent with SOLAS, it may compromise the safety & security of the vessel and crew
 - ii. If AIS is turned off, consider altering course and speed to minimize tracking by Dead Reckoning
 - d. Do not loiter when transiting the threat area and proceed with caution
 - e. If contacted by any unrecognized organization:
 - i. Report back to your company security officer and validate the source before responding
 - f. If contacted on VHF by "Yemeni Navy":
 - i. Ignore the VHF call and continue passage if safe to do so
 - ii. Describe the incident in follow up reports to UKMTO
 - g. Share instances of suspicious activity with UKMTO (with recordings or imagery where possible)
 - i. UAV sightings
 - ii. Communications challenges
 - h. In case of unexploded ordnance and debris on deck:
 - i. Maintain a safe distance (as far away as practically possible) and cordon off the area
 - ii. Do not touch or try to dismantle any debris

- iii. Be aware that any radio emissions may trigger the device
- iv. Request assistance through UKMTO, ask for an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team (EOD)
- i. Use of Best Management Practices (BMP) should be considered
 - i. Chain link fencing can be used to reduce the effects of an RPG

6. **Maritime Industry** is recommended to:

- a. Conduct a threat & risk assessment of all associated vessels and especially those that may have previous USA, UK or Israel ownership or associations *[to include recent port calls by vessels within the company and/or group structure]*
- b. Companies should plan and implement risk mitigation measures in advance of the furthest identified attack areas as depicted in the JMIC 'Overview of Incidents and Suspicious Activities' slide
- c. If an association is made, shipping companies are recommended to provide the information to UKMTO prior to transiting the threat area
- d. Ensure their managed vessels receive and follow the guidance for vessels
- e. **Review digital footprint**
- f. The JMIC is aware of increased email communication between unrecognized reporting entities and owners/operators
 - i. If contacted by any organization not officially recognized, report back to your company security officer and validate the source before responding
 - ii. Any response should be carefully considered
 - iii. Statements by Houthi forces to encourage merchant shipping to engage with the Houthi's Humanitarian Operations Coordination Centre (HOCC), or Yemeni Navy, should be disregarded and industry best practice and guidance should be followed in close communication with your company's CSO
- g. Open-source claims that vessels are targeted may not be factual
 - i. JMIC recommends verifying source for legitimacy



Joint Maritime Information Center



Additional Resources on Incident:

UKMTO Reporting Visit: <https://www.ukmto.org>

Email: watchkeepers@ukmto.org

Emergency Tel: +44 (0)2392 222060

Additional Resources on Industry Guidance:

BMP 5 – Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea:

<https://www.ics-shipping.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/bmp5-hi-res-min.pdf>

ATP – 02.1 NCAGS Guide to Owners, Operators, Masters and Officers:

https://shipping.nato.int/systems/file_download.ashx?pg=692&ver=2